

Maurice Hinchey NEWS

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\$94 MILLION IN PAYMENTS TO APPLE GROWERS BEGINS TODAY

WASHINGTON - U.S. Representative Maurice Hinchey (NY-22) today announced that payment of \$94 million to apple growers under the 2000 Apple Market Loss Assistance Program III (AMLAP-III) has begun. Hinchey was instrumental in securing the funds in the Farm Bill that was signed into law last year.

"Unfair competition from abroad has combined with natural disaster to place our apple growers in a very difficult position over the past several years," said Hinchey. "I am pleased that these latest federal funds are being distributed. I will continue to do whatever's necessary to help this important segment of our region's economy."

A member of the House Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee, Hinchey wrote an amendment to the Fiscal Year 2002 Agriculture Appropriations bill to provide \$150 million in aid to apple growers. The amendment was included in the House version of the bill, but not in the Senate version. Serving on the House-Senate conference committee to resolve the differences in the two bills, Hinchey fought to preserve the funding. The conference report that was later signed into law contained \$75 million for the apple growers. Distribution of those funds began in early November and has now been completed.

The farm bill provided another opportunity to obtain the necessary funding. Senator Patty Murray (WA) added an amendment to the Senate version of the bill to provide \$100 million in direct aid for apple growers. Hinchey led the fight for the measure on the House side. Negotiators from the House and Senate agreed on the \$94 million that is now being paid.

Hinchey also wrote the amendment to the Fiscal Year 2001 Agriculture Appropriations bill that provided \$138 million in emergency relief for growers. That marked the first time the federal government provided direct assistance to apple growers. Hinchey has been instrumental in securing a total of \$307 million to apple growers since 2000.

Under AMLAP-III, apple growers who signed up last fall will receive payments of 0.0134386 cents per pound for their 2000 crop. They will be paid on a maximum of five million pounds for each apple operation.